

Troy Green, AAA
(202) 942-2082
tgreen@national.aaa.com

Marisa Ollins, *Seventeen*
(212) 649-2577
mollins@hearst.com

AAA, *Seventeen* and DOT Recognize National Two-Second Turnoff Day

In an effort to curb distracted driving, young drivers across the country pledge to take two seconds to turnoff their wireless devices before getting behind the wheel to drive

WASHINGTON, D.C., (September 17, 2010) –Young drivers nationwide are pledging to take two seconds to turn off their cell phones and other wireless devices before getting behind the wheel to drive today, as part of National Two-Second Turnoff Day. The day is being promoted by AAA, *Seventeen* magazine and the U.S. Department of Transportation with events in Washington, D.C., and New York. According to a recent survey by AAA and *Seventeen*, almost nine in 10 teen drivers (86 percent) have driven while distracted, even though 84 percent of teen drivers know it's dangerous.

"Taking your eyes off of the road for two seconds doubles your risk of a crash or near-crash and National Two-Second Turnoff Day is an opportunity for young drivers nationwide to take control of their own safety behind the wheel by making the wise and responsible decision not to drive while distracted," said Kathleen Marvaso, AAA vice-president of public affairs. "National Two-Second Turnoff Day is a reminder to drivers of all ages that they should keep their eyes and attention on the road while driving at all times."

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for teen drivers, and an August 2010 survey of teen distracted driving behaviors released by AAA and *Seventeen* magazine revealed some disturbing facts, including:

- Of those teen drivers surveyed, 60 percent have talked on a cell phone and 28 percent have sent a text message while driving.
- Teen drivers who text while driving reported sending, on average, 23 text messages while driving in the past month.
- More than one-third of teen drivers (36 percent) believe they have been involved in a near-crash because of their own or someone else's distracted driving.

"Today's teens are heavily distracted by their cell phones and a car full of friends while they are driving," said *Seventeen* magazine Editor in Chief Ann Shoket. "We hope that on this Two-Second Turnoff Day we are showing them how easy it is to put down the phone and keep their focus on the road so everyone gets where they are going safely."

"Teen drivers are some of the most vulnerable drivers on the road due to inexperience, and adding cell phones to the mix only compounds the dangers," said National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator David Strickland. "As we prepare to convene the second national Distracted Driving Summit in Washington, D.C. next week, it is heartening to see so many young people pledging to turn off their phones when they're behind the wheel."

AAA offers several tools to help parents discuss the dangers of distracted driving with teens including StartSmart, an interactive program to help parents and teens safely navigate the learning-to-drive process. For more information on the free online program, visit TeenDriving.AAA.com.

AAA has also partnered with MonkeySee.com, an instructional video website, to produce eight educational videos on how to avoid common distractions behind the wheel. These videos can be found at MonkeySee.com/play/17097-how-to-avoid-distracted-driving.

“AAA hopes that today’s events are a springboard for further engagement and discussion on the topic of distracted driving,” Marvaso added. “Through our campaign to enact bans on texting while driving in all 50 states and other public outreach initiatives, our association has made distracted driving prevention and education a top priority.”

As North America’s largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA provides nearly 52 million members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding in 1902, the not-for-profit, fully tax-paying AAA has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. AAA clubs can be visited on the Internet at AAA.com.

AAA news releases, high resolution images, broadcast-quality video, fact sheets and podcasts are available on the AAA NewsRoom at AAA.com/news.

Stay connected with AAA on the web via:

[Twitter.com/AAAnews](https://twitter.com/AAAnews)

[Twitter.com/AAASafety](https://twitter.com/AAASafety)

[Twitter.com/AAAauto](https://twitter.com/AAAauto)

[YouTube.com/AAA](https://www.youtube.com/AAA)

[MySpace.com/AAAeveryday](https://myspace.com/AAAeveryday)

[Facebook.com/AAAFanPage](https://facebook.com/AAAFanPage)

[Facebook.com/AAATeenDriving](https://facebook.com/AAATeenDriving)

###